

TOWN MANAGER EVALUATION

FY2012

Select Board Member: Diana Stein

For the purposes of this document, the evaluation terms shall be defined as:

Commendable = Performance surpassing reasonable expectations

Satisfactory = Performance meeting reasonable expectations

Needs improvement = Performance below reasonable expectations, with improvement likely

Unsatisfactory = Performance below reasonable expectations, with improvement unlikely

Unable to judge = Insufficient information available for evaluation (Please explain)

AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY	Commendable	Satisfactory	Needs Improvement	Unsatisfactory	Unable to Judge	COMMENTS
<u>FISCAL MANAGEMENT</u>						
Annual Expectations						
1. Plans and organizes the preparation of an annual budget.	X					The budget passed Town Meeting easily.
2. Prepares budget in conformance with the Select Board's Budget Policy Guidelines memo.	X					
3. Plans, organizes and administers the adopted budget within approved revenues and expenditures.	X					The reports we receive quarterly show this to be the case.
FY12 Goal						
4. (FY12 Goal #1) The Town Manager shall develop specific recommendations for consideration by the Select Board to address the ongoing revenue challenge, to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. generating new revenue; b. reducing expenses through efficiencies in Town structure and service delivery, including regionalization of services where appropriate; c. negotiating contracts through the collective bargaining process that are reflective of the community's capability and willingness to support, and mindful of the stagnant economy and conservative projections for the next few years; d. pursuing an increased economic development profile to increase the tax base and reduce the burden on residential property taxpayers. 		X X X X				a. John and his staff do a fine job of finding ways to save the Town money by getting outside sources of funding. Examples are getting the PARC grant to finance the excellent work to restore the War Memorial Pool, saving money by changing the way school retirees get health insurance by including them on the Town plan plus his earlier work that got us reinsurance for extraordinary health care costs, and making us eligible for ca. \$300,000 through his and Stephanie Ciccarello's efforts that made Amherst a Green Community. There are other grants, too. It is good that John is expanding areas for solar power as the work on the old landfill languishes through the courts. On the other hand, we have not had any increase in money from the 5-colleges, nor any routine increase in other sources. Even if the rezoning would have passed, I am not sure that it would increase our tax

						<p>base as new residents create extra costs for the Town in schools, etc. and a study years ago show that residences give a zero gain. I note with dismay that Boltwood place appears to have its retail space unrented.</p> <p>b. In many ways, this is commendable as Town Hall seems to be better organized than ever with particular kudos to Rob Morra, the building inspector that John helped hire. Inspections has been reorganized and appears to be working much better. The problem is that the regionalization effort for dispatch appears stuck.</p> <p>c. The contracts from 2010 still rankle the non-union staff as is clear from the staff evaluations. So I hope that the state comparisons of salaries that John is making (and which I hope the SB will see soon) will assuage some of the staff that their salaries are not out of line or that we can do something about reasonable increases. We need not to balance the books on the backs of the hard working Town staff.</p> <p>d. Most of the excellent savings do not represent an increased economic profile—solar energy is one exception. But building more residences is not—and multi-use buildings without businesses to fill them are not. If John can recruit some outside industry compatible with our values to Amherst, that would really increase our economic profile. We are doing well with restaurants but some do not survive.</p>
<u>RELATIONSHIP WITH THE BOARD AND TOWN MEETING</u>						
Annual Expectations						
5. Makes professional recommendations to the Board on items requiring Board action.	X					John is completely professional in his dealing with the Select Board.
6. Interprets and executes the intent of Board policy.	X					He does—such as when we suggested a reordering of the priorities list.
7. Maintains a professional, impartial and effective working relationship with the Board.	X					Absolutely!
8. Presents to Town Meeting with thorough preparation and clear communication.	X					John is always prepared and clear in his presentations to Town Meeting and answers questions well. He tends to be leisurely in making his remarks – to avoid irritating those

						who thought he exceeded an appropriate amount of time, he might try speeding up his presentation. I think it is great when he admits he does not know the answer but will find out.
FY12 Goal						
<p>9. (FY12 Goal #6) The Town Manager shall keep the Select Board fully informed by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. responding to and initiating improved communication efforts; b. recognizing that any issue or change that directly or significantly impacts the community falls within the Select Board's authority to provide feedback; c. allowing the Select Board opportunity to provide feedback on policy/practice initiatives and changes before implementation; d. involving the Select Board in the determination of collective bargaining strategies for the current contract process, and keeping us updated on its progress; e. ensuring that all members of the Select Board are aware of anything significant before it appears in the newspaper. 	X	X				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Does not always reply to emails as quickly as I would like but is improving and is always willing to see me if there is a problem. b. Always good on this c. and on this. d. I feel that we are not as informed about collective bargaining as I wish—not so much updated but the arguments on both sides and parity issues. e. Always good on this too.
<u>LONG RANGE PLANNING</u>						
Annual Expectations						
10. Maintains a knowledge of new technologies, systems and methods, etc. in relation to Town services.		X				I appreciate that John works at this but wonder if more research and comparisons would have prevented some of the problems with the new parking system. Some staff seem to feel that their input on this was ignored.
FY12 Goals						
11. (FY12 Goal #7) The Town Manager shall provide the Select Board with a detailed assessment of Town-owned buildings regarding their current use, and anticipated future benefit and liability. He will make recommendations on whether or not it is in the Town's best interest to maintain ownership of each one. If any recommendations are to repurpose a building or not maintain its ownership, he will suggest how best to proceed.			X			No progress on this in terms of a document that shows all buildings.
12. (FY12 Goal #8) The Town Manager shall help Amherst become a greener, more sustainable community by initiating and advocating for new "green" efforts and programs, and he shall inform the Select Board and the community about these efforts and their results.	X					Am delighted with the progress on this front. Between the money for planting trees and Amherst becoming a Green Community and the effort to bring solar to the Town, I could not be happier.
13. (FY12 Goal #9) The Town Manager shall create, through consultation with each department's staff, a recommended staffing plan that suggests the optimal number and types of positions in each department to best address current service levels and key needs. This will provide a framework for prioritizing recommendations for future hiring. Such future recommendations should address the full cost of each position, including post-employment benefits.	X				X	I can't judge how good or poor the consultation with each department and whether a priority list of hires has been formalized with the full cost calculations has been made. I can comment though on the people who John has hired and state that all are impressed with the quality of the hires during his time. PD chief, fire chief, code enforcer, building

						inspector, SB office crew etc.
<u>STAFF AND PERSONNEL RELATIONS</u>						
Annual Expectations						
14. Models sound personnel procedures and practices in oversight of human resources function.	X	X				This is complex. Personnel hires excellent. Personnel Board did not agree with his recommendations re raises this year. Not sure that we can judge his oversight of this function. He recognized that the complaints about HR were real and has improved the situation with a new hire.
15. Leads, directs and develops Town staff.		X	X			Clearly many are happy but others feel he neglects or does not appreciate them.
16. Develops good staff morale and loyalty to the Town.		X	X			There is such a split on this—with many sounding appreciated and others feeling morale at a 10 year low.
17. Recruits and assigns the best available personnel in terms of their competencies.	X					Hires seem tops and I feel Town staff is much stronger than when I was elected.
18. Leads the negotiations of labor contracts representing Town interests and Board guidelines.		X	X			We have done well financially but the morale may have suffered. The new study comparing salaries in communities like ours should help determine what is appropriate.
FY12 Goals						
19. (FY12 Goal #4) The Town Manager shall make high staff morale a priority. Efforts shall include: a. increasing communication between himself and staff at all levels, in order to inform, engage and solicit feedback; b. encouraging a workplace culture of civility, mentoring and receptivity to new ideas and innovations for improved service delivery.			X X			About 30 percent of staff did not feel that they were kept informed—one alluded to an air of secrecy. The staff questionnaire had almost 50% saying needs improvement or unsatisfactory on creating a work culture that fosters high motivation for individual and team performance. This was a surprise and a disappointment.
20. (FY12 Goal #5) The Town Manager shall conduct an assessment of the Town's Human Resources needs and capabilities, in order to determine how well we are recruiting, hiring, retaining and supporting Town staff, and how aligned we are with best practices in the human resources field. The Town Manager shall inform the Select Board about the assessment results and his plan to address any necessary changes.	X					His hire of a new Human Resources person is a good step forward. As mentioned above, getting information on salaries for all workers in other communities to compare with ours will help to determine if Town staff are adequately compensated and how one should proceed if they are not.
<u>COMMUNITY and INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS</u>						
Annual Expectations						
21. Ensures that an attitude and feeling of helpfulness, courtesy and sensitivity to public perception exists in employees coming in contact with the public.	X					I have heard of only one complaint about a Town employee not responding in a timely way to a Library emergency. The rest of the Town staff seem to do a fine job.
22. Represents the Town to media as Chief Public Relations spokesperson on Town government issues.	X					I am always impressed at how well John represents the Town both at home and within the State. Upon public occasions, he has been called on the spur of the moment, and he always does a fine job.

23. Maintains awareness of developments and plans in other jurisdictions, including the colleges and university, that may relate to or affect Town government.	X					John always seems to know of pertinent issues in other municipalities—and if notified about them and hasn't heard, then he checks them out.
FY12 Goals						
<p>24. (FY12 Goal #2) The Town Manager shall continue to strengthen relationships with UMass and the Colleges, for concrete progress in areas that improve the community's quality of life by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. mitigating the impacts of a significant student population: on neighborhoods, on demand for public safety resources, on parking and traffic issues, and so forth; b. compensating for the significant amount of non-taxable property; c. pursuing issues of mutual benefit to the Town and the academic institutions 	c. X		a. X		b. X	<p>a. I do not feel that John has really faced up to the problem of many downtown properties being taken over by LLCs, with no resident living in the property. The potential, negative impact is of concern—not just to neighbors, though I think their concerns about quality of their life are valid, but what it means to the downtown area as a whole. It could change the nature of Amherst in significant ways.</p> <p>b. We do not get any additional money from non-taxable property that I know of through the academic institutions.</p> <p>c. Clearly John works hard to keep up good relationships with UMass where he earns kudos for his efforts and support. I think he is off to a good start with President Martin, and I hope also with President Lash.</p>
<p>25. (FY12 Goal #3) The Town Manager shall actively engage the community to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. provide information about Town successes and challenges, and to seek support for initiatives that address the latter; b. gather information about strengths and weaknesses of municipal service delivery 	a. X	b. X	a. X			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Anyone who listens to the SB meetings can hear a statement from John about the successes and challenges that Amherst has are part of each meeting. Not successful about getting all the support needed for the last proposed zoning—of concern to me is his stated idea that we should change zoning to take a majority rather than a 2/3 vote. Better in my mind is to win over those by coming up with a plan that is a better one. b. John has been receptive to learning about the strengths and weaknesses of some departments and the new hires have dramatically improved services etc. in Town Hall. Please look at the area(s) that still garner significant complaints, and which are not allowing us to achieve our full potential.

<u>GENERAL EXPECTATIONS</u>		
26. Feel free to comment on strengths or weaknesses in any of the following areas: Professionalism Community spirit Leadership Defends conviction under pressure Enthusiasm Openness to differing views/new information Accessibility Resourcefulness Setting priorities Advocacy with State and Federal Government Communication style Crisis management Listening skills Responsiveness Public speaking Facilities management		Comments Areas that are commendable: Professionalism (noted by many), Community spirit (he lives here and thus cares), Leadership (clearly is a leader and many say he is the best Town Manager we have ever had), Defends conviction under pressure (possibly to a fault—but with remarkable patience), Enthusiasm, Listening skills, Public Speaking, Advocacy with State and possibly Federal Government (liked that he stayed in touch with PARC officials and knows what the State legislature is doing that has implications for Amherst), Crisis management (well shown by his work during the Halloween storm where he worked hard despite recovering from the fall), Public speaking (always informative and smooth presentation), Facilities management (due to our excellent Ron Bohonowicz). Satisfactory or needs improvement—Openness to differing views, Accessibility by email can be slow for some, not always prompt for me. No comment about the others.
<u>OTHER COMMENTS</u>		

27. If you are willing to share any additional information, insight, or experience relevant to this evaluation, please do so here.

John's leadership is superlative in many ways—and make us all glad that he is our Town manager: his chairmanship of PVTa, and the BID, his push for solar energy and promoting Amherst as Green Community, borrowing money to increase the number of roads being properly repaired, his hiring of excellent professionals to carry out the work of the Town, promoting of Safe and Healthy Neighborhoods, allocating sufficient money in the budget for planning street trees so that we can catch up with the many years of losses, etc. Perhaps the excellent financial position of Amherst is the most outstanding. With his sound hire of Sandy Pooler, the two have saved us much money such as working with IT to get security cameras for the library at half the original cost, the health care shift of school retirees to our insurance program etc, have made Amherst the envy of many towns in the Commonwealth.

That said, there are some concerns. Employees, while most are supportive, there are some who state that employee morale is at an all time low, particularly for the managers. It appears that some this group feels unappreciated—that the praise they get is hollow because when John presents their accomplishments, it is done as “I” did it rather than mentioning them by name. Some feel their advice is ignored.

I am concerned more than John about the number of lovely houses that are being taken over by LLCs, which means they are essentially being converted to boarding houses by new owners whose past records of management and maintenance are poor. This has led to the moving of one resident. I hope that she will be a lone example and not the first of many.

Another concern, is that of new partnership between the Town and the Schools for the Out of Time after school program. Many feel that it was a shame that the Crocker Farm, which had functioned well, had to be changed. I know the director of the former program did not choose to apply for the new program. That is fine if it did not mean her taking a huge cut in salary. This is part of a bigger issue I worry about—balancing the books of the Town on the backs of the poor. I hope we can be sensitive to these kinds of issues in the future.

Some in Town feel that John should not vote or at least should not both vote and also advocate for his policies as they got used to that in Barry Delcastillo's time. I see their point but think it is John's right to do both but perhaps best not to speak longer than others.

Lastly, I did find worrisome the following. According to a second-hand report, John told the chair of the Shade Tree Committee on what issues her committee “ought and ought not focus.” This seems to be treading on their rights as a committee and should not occur.

